(b) if not, what is Government's assessment and whether it is also a fact that in rich countries like America and England these expenses are 15.3 per cent and 10.6 per cent respectively; and

(c) if not, what is Government's response in this regard and what steps are being taken by Government to make medicine and treatment cheaper?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Drug Policies, as announced from time to time, are directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices. The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulation based thereon are under price control. Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

This Ministry has made no study on the cost of treatment.

Uniform policy on pricing and availability of drugs

1616. SHRI KARNENDU BHATTACHARJEE: Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government propose to formulate a uniform policy at the national level on the pricing and availability of drugs to do away with discrepancies in prices of medicines and prevent sale of spurious drugs;

(b) whether the disparities in prices is benefiting the middlemen and affecting the poor patients; and

(c) the early steps proposed to check the exploitation of patients by the druggists taking advantage of variance in prices?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) to (c) The Drug Policies, as announced from time to time, are directed towards ensuring abundant availability of quality drugs at reasonable prices. The quality of drugs is ensured through the provisions of Drugs and Cosmetic Act, 1940 and rules framed thereunder.

The 74 bulk drugs specified in the First Schedule of the Drugs (Prices Control) Order, 1995 (DPCO, 95) and the formulations based thereon are

under price control Prices of non-Scheduled formulations are fixed by the manufacturers themselves, however, the Government takes corrective measures where the public interest is found to be adversely affected.

All medicines with same contents need not cost the same as the economics of production differs from one manufacturer to another.

Conversion to gas/coal based plants

1617. SHRI DIPANKAR MUKHERJEE:
SHRI CHITTABRATA MAJUMDAR:

Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a lack of coordinated approach between Ministries of Chemicals and Fertilizers, Petroleum and Natural Gas and Coal for converting Naphtha based urea plants to either gas based or coal based plants;

(b) if so, whether a group of Ministry is being formed to address the issue; and

(c) if not, the detailed action plan for reviving/rebuilding such units in States of Bihar, Jharkhand, West Bengal and Orissa where there is no urea producing unit at present in public or private sector?

THE MINISTER OF CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM VILAS PASWAN): (a) The Government has in January, 2004 formulated a policy for conversion of existing Naphtha/FO/LSHS based urea units to natural gas/LNG as feedstock. The plants based on Naphtha/FO/LSHS are less energy efficient and have a higher production cost. Therefore, the policy encourages an early conversion to natural gas/LNG so that they acquire a competitive edge in the deregulated and liberalised economic scenario.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) In view of the Government's Common Minimum Programme, the issue regarding the feasibility of revival of closed Fertilizer Public Sector undertakings based on market demand and their techno-economic viability has been entrusted to Projects & Development India Limited. Separately,